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FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JTREADWELL; INR/RAA: FEHRENRIECH; NSC FOR MGAVIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KDEM PREL PGOV PHUM TZ

SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: VOTER REGISTRATION RESUMES ON BOTH ISLANDS

REF: (A) Dar es Salaam 532 (B) Dar es Salaam 531 and (C) Dar es Salaam 515 and previous

1.(U) SUMMARY: On September 12, the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC) will restart the registration of voters process that had been suspended since August 4 due to violence. ZEC will continue to require the controversial Zanzibar I.D. in order to register, even though there has been no discernable change in the way I.D.s are being issued. President Karume is in Pemba to witness the activity, while opposition Civic United Front (CUF) says its members will boycott the process. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) ZEC Chairman Khatib Mwinyichande, in a news conference announcing September 12 resumption of voter registration, said the outage outQ called August 4 after violence in Pemba allowed for consultations with all involved and paved the way for a smoother resumption of the exercise. Nonetheless, ZEC will continue to require the controversial Zanzibar I.D. in order to register, even though there has been no discernable change in the way I.D.s are being issued. Registrations will begin exactly where they left off in Ole, Pemba (where militia troops fired at demonstrators; ref C), and continue throughout the island until January 10.

13. (U) President Karume is in Pemba to witness the restart of voter activities. Opposition Civic United Front (CUF) says its members will boycott the process because not all eligible applicants had equal access to Zanzibar I.D.s, the party claims. CUF also told the press that it will stage a protest march and rally in northern Pemba, but Senior Police Officer Said Salum Malekano said police had banned the planned demonstration. He promised tight security at the registration centers. Embassy Zanzibar Affairs Specialist also is in Pemba to observe events.

14. (U) On the main island of Unguja, the remaining UNDP-sponsored registration machines have arrived, so ZEC also will start simultaneous registrations September 12 on that island. It will begin in CUF Unguja stronghold Nungwi and move through the other constituencies until February 14.

15. (U) Meanwhile, in an attempt to further isolate opposition CUF, Zanzibar's CCM government has been giving primacy in the state-controlled press to some obscure, relatively unknown political parties. One such party (National League for Democracy) has used

the forum to attack the U.S. for QinterferenceQ in local affairs because of our Travel Alert. Even nationally known opposition party CHADEMA seems to be involving itself in the debate. Nationally, CHADEMA has brought a lawsuit against the Zanzibar I.D. card saying it is anti-Union and therefore unconstitutional, while locally CHADEMA has taken the side of CCM against CUF, supporting resumption of the registration (even though registration is based on having a Zanzibar I.D.)

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: Even though NLD and another, heretofore unknown, party called QAssociation of Farmers PartyQ (AFP), have no representation in Government nor are they likely to gather enough signatures to put candidates on the ballot in 2010, the ruling CCM/Government of Zanzibar seems to be trying to establish the message that CUF is not the only opposition party in Zanzibar. Some accuse the NLD of being on the Zanzibar GovernmentQs payroll. CHADEMA, CUFQs arch rival on the mainland, has few supporters and no seats in Zanzibar. However, it seems willing to lend tacit support to any CCM Zanzibar gerrymandering if it will cost CUF. Of broader concern, however, is CCM ZanzibarQs efforts to legitimizing parties without constituents in Zanzibar. If they become participants in civil dialogue on the islands, it will make it harder to work out a power-sharing deal to stave off violence before the 2010 elections.

CUNANE